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NORCOM, ELLEN FARMER. Chance, Sequence and Field Painting in Relation to a Selected Environment. (1969) Directed by: Mr. Walter Barker. pp. 4.

This thesis is composed of seven circular canvases exhibited in the Weatherspoon Gallery at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. It is accompanied by a brief statement about the work and is illustrated by 35 m m (2 x 2) color slide photographs of the exhibit.

Ellen F. Norcom

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro
May, 1969

Approved by


Thesis Advisor

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IN RELATION TO A SELECTED ENVIRONMENT

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser

Walter Barker

Oral Examination
Committee Members

Walter Barker

Joan Suggs
Norma Hardin
Norma Polley

April 29, 1969

Date of Examination

This thesis is represented by an exhibition of paintings on canvas. The size and number of canvases to be included in the thesis presentation is determined by the available space in the Weatherspoon Gallery for which they were designed. Each canvas is a circle seven feet in diameter. Because of the large scale of the canvases, the group constitutes a walk-in. The scale, shape and proportion are designed to modify the environment.

All canvases are mounted on axis to permit manual rotation by the spectator. The possibility of participation leaves the order open to random chance patterns which are controlled to some degree by the surface divisions of each canvas.

The expansions and contractions of the positive and negative space areas are varied on each canvas while color intensity, shape and over-all size of the canvases are constant. The negative spaces are painted with three layers of acrylic stain applied with a large sponge. The underpainting and overpainting of the stained areas were necessary in order to produce a desirable quality of luminosity and depth. The positive areas are sprayed with metallic powder suspended in polymer emulsion. The degree of visual density of the negative area is contrasted with the metallic surface.

The color choice is influenced by the general idea which is an expression of space and by the night sky colors. The placement of the divisions of color areas is deliberately determined by a visual order of proportional arrangement. The line that results from the meeting of

the positive and negative areas could be interpreted as an apparent local or visual horizon.

By means of manual rotation of the canvases, the horizons may be set as parallel to one another, or as a drift to one side while others parallel the main drift, or at random arrangements. With this adjustment of line or setting of the horizon, a certain amount of visual movement is evident. Through these free flowing movements each canvas in the environmental space leads to its successor until the cycle is completed. Each canvas in the series stands out for a certain degree of attention in comparison with the others. For example, the position within the gallery area sets up a field in which the canvases at the ends and in the middle are more dominating by virtue of their positions. The first and last canvases also serve to check or counterbalance and to reverse the visual flow of movement by their stationary characteristics of being either completely positive or completely negative. The series may be read from positive to negative to positive, or from negative to positive to negative, or simply from positive to negative or negative to positive. In effect the series ends where it begins and repeats itself.

The underlying emphasis is on space; not cluttered, polluted, earthbound space, nor Renaissance space based on illusion and perspective systems, nor impressionist space filled with light and color, but on a contemporary concept of space that is without limits or bounds, unleashed and unexplored.